

Message Text

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14

ACTION EA-14

INFO OCT-01 ADP-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 INR-09 NSAE-00 PA-03

RSC-01 USIA-12 PRS-01 COME-00 EB-11 LAB-06 SIL-01

OMB-01 T-03 AID-20 CU-04 PM-09 TRSE-00 AGR-20 SS-14

NSC-10 L-03 RSR-01 /144 W
----- 027594

R 120610 Z MAR 73 ZDK
FM AMEMBASSY PHNOM PENH
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 0459
INFO AMEMBASSY BANGKOK
AMEMBASSY SAIGON
CINCPAC
USDEL FRANCE

C O N F I D E N T I A L PHNOM PENH 2204

E. O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT, ECON, CB

SUBJECT: UPDATE ON STRIKE SITUATION

REF: PHNOM PENH 2160; PHNOM PENH 2177

1. STRIKING TEACHERS MET ON THE AFTERNOON OF MARCH 10 TO CONSIDER THE SIXTEEN POINT PROGRAM PRESENTED TO THE PARLIAMENT BY PRIME MINISTER HANG THUN HAK THE DAY BEFORE. THEY DECIDED THAT THE PRICE OF GASOLINE MUST BE REDUCED TO ITS ORIGINAL LEVEL OF 16 RIELS PER LITRE RATHER THAN THE 25 RIELS ANNOUNCED BY THE GOVERNMENT; THAT THE PRICES OF WATER AND ELECTRICITY MUST REMAIN UNCHANGED; AND THAT THE GOVERNMENT MUST TAKE EFFECTIVE MEASURES TO ASSURE THAT RICE AND PHARMACEUTICALS ARE SOLD AT THE OFFICIAL PRICES (THEY ARE PRESENT UNAVAILABLE AT THESE PRICES ON THE OPEN MARKET). THE TEACHERS ARE CONTINUING THEIR STRIKE UNTIL THEIR DEMANDS ARE SATISFIED.

2. THE CENTRAL COMMITTEE OF THE KHMER STUDENT ASSOCIATION (UNIVERSITY STUDENTS) MET ON MARCH 11 AND DECIDED TO DISCONTINUE ITS TRIKE IN ORDER TO ALLOW THE GOVERNMENT TIME TO IMPLEMENT
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THE MEASURES IT HAS ANNOUNCED. THIS DECISION IS NOT FINAL UNTIL RATIFIED BY A STUDENT CSGXGRESS WHICH WILL BE HELD ON MARCH 14 BUT IT IS PROBABLE THAT UNIVERSITY STUDENTS WILL RETURN TO CLASS ON MARCH 15 (UNIVERSITY PROFESSORS ARE NOT ON STRIKE, ONLY PRIMARY AND SECONDARY TEACHERS).

3. THERE IS NOW CONSIDERABLE SENTIMENT THAT THE DEMANDS OF THE STRIKING TEACHERS ARE UNREASONABLE. THE INDEPENDENT DAILY KHMER EKREACH FOR EXAMPLE COMMENTED THAT " IF, FOLLOWING THE GOVERNMENT DECISION, THE TEACHERS STILL REMAIN DISSATISFIED, OPINION-- AT LEAST PART OF IT -- WILL NOT FAIL TO ACCUSE THEM OF BEING LED BY THEIR PASSIONS". THIS ATTITUDE IS REFLECTED IN THE DECISION OF THE STUDENTS TO GIVE THE GOVERNMENT A CHANCE. WHILE THE ECONOMIC PROBLEMS WHICH SPARKED THE STRIKES ARE STILL A VERY IMPORTANT ISSUE, IT APPEARS THAT THE PRESENT GOVERNMENT POLICY MAY BE SUCCESSFUL, FOR THE MOMENT AT LEAST, IN COOLING THE SITUATION.
SWANK

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*** Current Handling Restrictions *** n/a

*** Current Classification *** CONFIDENTIAL

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30 JUN 2005

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TAGS: ECON, PINT, CB
To: BANGKOK
CINCPAC
EA
FRANCE
SAIGON
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